

They won't say
cheese: Cliff,
Clair, and the
photogenic clan

DVD & Video



DVD Q&A

John Lithgow



Now that **3rd Rock From the Sun: Season 1** (Unrated, 7 hrs., 22 mins., 1996, Anchor Bay) has finally landed on DVD, we subjected Lithgow (a.k.a. otherworldly emissary Dick Solomon) to an alien probe. —Charles Curtis

Have you seen the DVD?

I can't get enough. It's like my own private reunion episode! **Did you enjoy sparring with Jane Curtin, your love interest?** Dick Solomon is a tennis ball and needs a hard surface to bounce off. Boy, is Jane ever a hard surface; she hit it back harder than I hit it to her. **So did fellow alien French Stewart ever open his eyes?** He couldn't do the role without squinting, but he was so funny, everyone decided, "Let's have a squinty character." **War of the Worlds... 3rd Rock...it's an alien invasion!** *The X-Files* was a big hit, and that was the best thing for us. When people are taking something extremely seriously, that's the time to take out the pig's bladder.

Family Reunion

DVD critic Dalton Ross happily ditches his homework to hang with the Huxtables on *The Cosby Show: Season 1*

Bill Cosby, Phylicia Rashad
Unrated, 9 hrs., 35 mins.,
1984–85 (UrbanWorks)

As a kid, I never missed an episode of *The Cosby Show*. Then again, I never missed an episode of *She's the Sheriff*, so it was with some trepidation that I approached this season 1 set. Was the show as fresh and funny as I remembered, or merely a convenient excuse to ditch homework for 30 minutes? Thankfully, the answer is the former. In fact, save

for one episode in which Denise's friends teach Cliff to break-dance, *The Cosby Show* remains pretty timeless. Cosby (like Jerry Seinfeld and Ray Romano after him) had a knack for finding humor in everyday oddities, be they either unwanted Father's Day gifts or dead goldfish. Even the "very special episodes" ("Theo and the Joint" comes to mind) do not go over the top in their specialness.

But the program was groundbreaking in other ways, portraying two successful African-Amer-

ican characters (he a doctor, she a lawyer) while also paying tribute to black legends (look for guest-starring spots from luminaries like Dizzy Gillespie and Lena Horne). In the 2002 TV special, *The Cosby Show...A Look Back* (included in this package), such fans as Oprah, Quincy Jones, and P. Diddy—who informs us that "From a fashion iconic point of view, the Cosby sweaters were definitely the flava"—discuss how the sitcom expanded the perceived definition of what it meant to be black in America. Of course, the retrospective highlights more humor than history, showing outtakes and audition footage, as well as the myriad ways producers concealed Rashad's pregnancy (they raised the kitchen counter, cut a hole in the mattress, and even had her sit behind a giant teddy bear). At least there's no hiding the laughs. **B+**

King's Ransom of the Week

ELVIS IS ALIVE! I SWEAR...

...I Just Saw Him Eating a Ding Dong! In this mockumentary, celebs like Fred Willard and Dr. Joyce Brothers wonder whether Elvis still walks among us. Oh, don't be cruel.

